



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
Hawaii Emergency Management Agency

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GOVERNOR

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DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HONOLULU — The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) has confirmed that there was no ballistic missile and that there were no computer hacks to the HI-EMA system. The cause of the false alarm was human error.

HI-EMA has already taken measures to ensure that an incident such as the one that occurred this morning does not happen again. HI-EMA has also started a review of cancellation procedures to inform the public immediately if a cancellation is warranted. We understand that false alarms such as this can erode public confidence in our emergency notification systems. We understand the serious nature of the warning alert systems and the need to get this right 100% of the time.

“I know first-hand how today’s false alarm affected all of us here in Hawaii, and I am sorry for the pain and confusion it caused. I, too, am extremely upset about this and am doing everything I can do to immediately improve our emergency management systems, procedures and staffing,” said Gov. David Ige.

The following is a synopsis of what occurred:

Approx. 8:05 a.m. – A routine internal test during a shift change was initiated. This was a test that involved the Emergency Alert System, the Wireless Emergency Alert, but no warning sirens.

8:07 a.m. – A warning test was triggered statewide by the State Warning Point, HI-EMA.

8:10 a.m. – State Adjutant Maj. Gen. Joe Logan, validated with the U.S. Pacific Command that there was no missile launch.

Honolulu Police Department notified of the false alarm by HI-EMA.

8:13 a.m. – State Warning Point issues a cancellation of the Civil Danger Warning Message. This would have prevented the initial alert from being rebroadcast to phones that may not have received it yet. For instance, if a phone was not on at 8:07 a.m., if someone was out of range and has since came into cell coverage (Hikers, Mariners, etc.) and/or people getting off a plane.

8:20 a.m. – HI-EMA issues public notification of cancellation via their Facebook and Twitter accounts.

8:24 a.m. – Governor Ige retweets HI-EMA’s cancellation notice.

8:30 a.m. – Governor posts cancellation notification to his Facebook page.

8:45 a.m. – After getting authorization from FEMA Integral Public Alert and Warning System, HI-EMA issued a “Civil Emergency Message” remotely.

The following action was executed by the Emergency Alert System (EAS):

1. EAS message over Local TV/Radio Audio Broadcast & Television Crawler Banner.

“False Alarm. There is no missile threat to Hawaii.”

“False Alarm. There is no missile threat or danger to the State of Hawaii. Repeat. There is no missile threat or danger to the State of Hawaii. False Alarm.”

2. Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA)

“False Alarm. There is no missile threat or danger to the State of Hawaii.”

9:30 a.m. – Governor makes initial media notification.

9:34 a.m. – Governor’s message posted to his Facebook and Twitter accounts.

These are the actions that HI-EMA has already taken.

1. On the recommendations of the HI-EMA Administrator, Vern Miyagi, the Governor has suspended all future drills until HI-EMA has completed a full analysis of the event.
2. HI-EMA has already instituted a two-person activation/verification rule for tests as well as actual missile launch notifications.
3. A cancellation command that can be done automatically that can be triggered within seconds of an error, has been put in place.

This is the process that HI-EMA is currently reviewing:

1. Expanding notification processes for Hawaii’s Congressional Delegations, County Mayors, and key staff.

A formal preliminary report of findings and corrective actions will be issued next week.

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